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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/EDC/MR

FROM : Amembassy HELSINKI

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

REF :

REVIEWED BY *L. J. Hall*

DESP. NO.

DATE

RECEIVED DATE November 8, 1961

TS AUTH

REASON(S)

DATE

ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS

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RE OF FOI EXEMPTIONS *NR 7*

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	REC'D <i>11-16</i>	IN F OTHER <i>0</i>

SUBJECT: Presidential Candidate Honka Speaks on Soviet Note

Enclosed is an Embassy translation of a speech given by presidential candidate Olavi HONKA November 4 - 5 in western Finland at Vammala, Kankaanpää, and Pori.

In his speech, Honka dealt mainly with the Soviet Note of October 30 to Finland requesting consultations on joint defense because of the ostensible threat posed by West German militarism, in accordance with Article II of the 1948 Finnish-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Collaboration, and Mutual Assistance.

He said that the surprise caused here by the Note was only natural and that it had shaken the Finns out of their comfortable belief that Finland would be able to remain outside the great power conflicts.

He then examined the language of various sections of the Treaty, pointing out in connection with Article II (which calls for joint consultations in the event of a threat) that "discussions regarding the existence of a threat are not the same as negotiations concerning a threat which has been established by both sides."

After stressing Finland's desire to live and let live, he referred to Finland's tradition of meeting its obligations, saying, "My absolute conviction is that treaties must be observed. Otherwise, there is no use in making them." Then he exhorted the Finns to keep calm and to ignore foreign reaction: "We must think about our own affairs with our own heads." Referring to the rights which he said were guaranteed by the Treaty, he said, "I see no reason to suppose that these rights will not be respected."

He concluded by attesting to the unanimous support of the Finnish people behind the country's foreign policy.

For the Ambassador:

Harvey F. Nelson, Jr.
Harvey F. Nelson, Jr.
Second Secretary of Embassy

Enclosure: Translation

CC: Amembassies Stockholm, Copenhagen, Oslo, Bonn, Paris, London, Moscow.

EV Youngquist:blr 11/8/61

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SPEECH BY OLAVI HONKA

at Vammala, Kankaanpää, and Pori

November 4 - 5, 1961

I scarcely err when I suppose that questions of foreign policy have occupied and are still occupying every citizen's mind. According to Article 33 of our Form of Government Act, "Finland's relations with foreign powers are taken care of by the President. Treaties with foreign powers, however, must be approved by the Parliament in case they contain stipulations which concern legislation, or which otherwise, in accordance with the Constitution, need the Parliament's approval. The President decides on war and peace with the Parliament's consent. All communications with foreign powers or Finnish representatives abroad shall be transmitted through the Minister handling foreign affairs." Thus questions of foreign policy must follow the order prescribed by these stipulations. Though individual citizens do not have, in this system, a direct opportunity to affect the country's foreign policy, it is understandable that Finns of the present generation are actively interested in foreign relations.

It is quite natural that the Note which Finland recently received from the Soviet Union has surprised the Finns, not only those who are responsible for foreign policy, but the whole nation.

In our country we have perhaps lulled ourselves into the belief that conflicts between the great powers would not affect in any way the Finnish people, which is unanimously desirous of peace and wishes to remain outside great power conflicts. Now we have once again awakened to the realization that suppositions and images and cold reality are two different things.

One cannot immediately point out on the world map the areas through which, or above which, the interests and pursuits of other states would automatically be directed or could be directed. Developments in transportation, information media and economic intercourse more and more unite the world as a whole in which nations more and more must pay heed to one another's pursuits. This is illustrated by the steadily growing number of the UN members and the drive to extend the UN's sphere of influence all over the globe.

Now we are confronted by a fact connected with this same universal development. Whether we want to or not, the Finnish people also have to acknowledge this fact. Furthermore, our nation's life is being guided by certain laws and stipulations as well as principles and traditions based on historic continuity.

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Our relations particularly with the Soviet Union are determined by the 1948 Treaty of Friendship, Collaboration, and Mutual Assistance between the Republic of Finland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The Treaty was originally made for ten years, but in 1955 it was extended for twenty years during J. K. Paasikivi's administration. The purpose of the Treaty is to protect Finland and the Soviet Union against an armed attack by Germany or states allied with Germany. Article I specifies the measures to be taken to repel such an attack. Article II stipulates that the parties to the Treaty will negotiate with one another in case the threat of a military attack such as indicated in the Treaty has been established. The Note which we have received proposes consultations regarding measures to secure the defense of the borders of both countries. The Article has been interpreted unanimously to mean that this threat has to be established by both sides. There is reason to point out in this connection that discussions regarding the existence of a threat are not the same as negotiations concerning a threat which has been established by both sides.

It has to be stressed particularly that the purpose of the Treaty is the securing of peace. In Article III the parties to the Treaty give assurance that their intention is to participate most sincerely in all measures aimed at the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the goals and principles of the United Nations.

In the present situation, there is also reason to refer to Article VI of the said Treaty, which says explicitly: "The High Contracting Parties to the Treaty promise to follow the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and independence as well as non-interference in the other country's internal affairs."

This is plain language which is regarded as a guiding star by all those who value the cause of the fatherland, and the defense of its freedom, independence, and right of self-determination. This stipulation of the Treaty does not bind unilaterally only one party but both of them.

When acting on the basis of reality, there is not a single small nation which cherishes its freedom which wants to interfere in the internal affairs of other nations and, least of all, in those of its great neighbors. This is clear even without a particular treaty, but even so, the following point has been included in Article II of our Peace Treaty: "Both Parties to the Treaty pledge to refrain from all attacks on one another and to refrain from making any alliances or participating in coalitions which are directed against either Party of the Treaty." I do not believe that there is a single responsible person in our country who would think or act against our country's interests and the stipulations of the express Treaty. Such an action would be a crime against our nation.

In our relations with the Soviet Union we must, in addition to this, take into consideration the principles of the preamble to the Treaty

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of Friendship and Mutual Assistance, according to which one must strive constantly to develop friendly relations between Finland and the Soviet Union, because the strengthening of good neighborly relations and collaboration accords with the vital interests of both countries.

Finland has received the acknowledgement and admiration of the whole world because it is the only country which scrupulously has paid its debt to the victors of World War I, despite the fact that circumstances during the period between the receiving and paying of the debt have changed completely and that our country, like certain other countries, could have reneged on its commitments. In the same way, we have paid the war reparations after World War II precisely in accordance with our commitments. In the opinion of us Finns there is nothing particularly strange in this because it corresponds with our principles to fulfill our promises. Since we have been prepared to keep our word in scrupulously paying our debt from World War I, a matter which was of little importance for our independence, how could one even think that we would fail to meet our obligations in great issues and when important treaties are concerned which are vital for our country. The respect of the Finnish nation for the upholding of laws and commitments is based on precious traditions of centuries which remain steadfast. My absolute conviction is that treaties must be observed. Otherwise, there is no use in making them.

The Note which we have received has drawn more attention abroad than here at home. The explanation is simple. We see in the Note an initiative for the focusing of our attention on questions which the Soviet Union deems important for its security. Other people have their own opinions, goals and pursuits, according to which they act, and we must bear this in mind when we read foreign newspaper stories.

We have to think about our own affairs with our own brains. If we do so, I see no reason for the spreading of a sense of fear or uneasiness. There is no reason for that. The Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance is not a document which only binds us; it is also a document which guarantees us rights.

I see no reason to suppose that these rights will not be respected. The evoking of such suspicions, not to talk about spreading them, is not correct towards our contracting party, and besides, it is disastrous for us ourselves.

My opinion has been, and still is, that our nation is quite unanimous regarding foreign policy. The entire Finnish people supports the foreign policy which has been followed since the war.

Our nation stands honestly on this line. This fact cannot be changed by explanations or hints made in our country.

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